

DATE May 8, 2011 (Mother's Day)

TEXT: PROVERBS 31:10-31

TITLE: "A GODLY MOM IN THE REAL WORLD"

SERIES: "GET SMART" – Wisdom for Living from the Book of Proverbs #2

THEME: MOTHERS DAY

(Pray for moms around you)

INTRODUCTION: Someone once said, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." Mother's Day generates a world of emotions. For some, it is a day of joy, while, for others, it is a day of sorrow and pain. It can be a day to reflect and refocus. For young people, it can be a day to dream for the future. And, for young moms, it can be a day be encouraged and to refocus.

This morning, as we look at this passage of Scripture, there are key principles that apply to all of us, though the focus of the passage is on the godly woman. In the passage are truths that help "real moms" live lives of real godliness in a real world.

ILLUSTRATION: (*pictures) I came across these thoughts about real moms who live in the real world.

"Real Mothers don't eat quiche; they don't have time to make it."

"Real Mothers know that their kitchen utensils are probably in the sandbox."

"Real Mothers often have sticky floors, filthy ovens, and happy kids."

"Real Mothers don't want to know what the vacuum just sucked up."

"Real Mothers sometimes ask, "Why me?" and get their best answer when a little voice says, "Because I love you best."

Moms face many challenges as they seek to be the parents they desire to be. Appreciated.

ILLUSTRATION: Shirley Ratcliff tells this. "When our daughter, Kathy, was participating in a parenting class at her church, she explained to her 6-year-old daughter, Kayla, that she was taking a course to help make her a better mommy. The next Sunday, after church, Kayla became upset and had a tantrum because she was not getting her way. Both parents tried to calm her. But, with tears streaming down her face, and in a loud voice, Kayla announced to her mother, "You told me you were taking a course to make you a better mommy. Well, it's not working!"

ILLUSTRATION: Through the years many poems have been written about moms. Here is one that was written in an Acrostic form. (*On screen)

M Is for the million things she gave me,
O Means only that she's growing old,
T Is for the tears 'twere shed to save me,
H Is for her heart as pure as gold,
E Is for her eyes with love-light shining,
R Means right and right she'll always be.

1. Acrostic poems are quite common in the Old Testament.
2. This is an acrostic poem that contains 22 stanzas or couplets, each beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
3. In Proverbs, much has been said about the contentious and adulteress woman.
4. I remember having discussions in college about **Proverbs 25:24, which says, "Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife."**
5. In this last chapter of Proverbs, the sage presents the better portrait of commendable woman.
6. Superman was invented in the 1930's but, in one sense, superwoman goes way back to the time of Solomon.
7. It seems like the passage paints a description of a perfect woman.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Pictures with these) Some time ago, some children were asked, "Was anything about your mom perfect?"

1. **One child responded, "Her teeth are perfect, but she bought them from the dentist."**
2. **"Her casserole recipes. But we hate them."**
3. **"Just her children."**
8. Characteristics of self-sacrifice and self-discipline leap off the page as we study this portrayal of godly women.
9. She is portrayed as a kind of home economist with ingenuity and as an industrious and farsighted manager.
10. She is a tireless worker, strong in character, with a well-clothed family.
11. She bestows status on her husband.
12. She laughs at the time to come because she has all things so well in hand.
13. Despite her engagement with the busyness of life, she is wise, kind, and not forgetful of the poor.
14. She was a woman respected and honored by those who knew her best.
15. She was a woman who invested in others and lived wisely.
16. As we study the Book of Proverbs during these days, we will discover again and again that it is about living a life of wisdom.
17. If we look past the laundry list of accomplishments of this godly woman, we discover the difference wisdom can make in a life.
18. This woman had learned and applied the lessons of wisdom revealed in the Book of Proverbs.
19. The theme of this poem captures the ideals of wisdom that fill the book of Proverbs.

20. In this poem portraying a godly woman of noble character, the ideals of wisdom and the effect of living a life of wisdom is clearly seen.
21. Through the centuries, Christians have seen this chapter as a paradigm for godly women.
22. However, this is more than a tribute to Hebrew womanhood.
23. The poem certainly presents a pattern for godly women who want to develop a life of wisdom; but since it is essentially about wisdom, its lessons are for both men and women to develop.
24. It is about living a life of wisdom.
25. It is on my heart to address moms, and especially young moms today, but the truths are for all of us.
26. There are two characteristics I want to focus on; the first being that she invested her life in others.

I. (vs.10 – 27) THE CHARACTERISTIC OF INVESTING IN OTHERS

“A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.” (Proverbs 31:10)

1. Investing in others is at the very heart of godliness.
2. The value of a godly woman cannot be measured in rubies or priceless gems.
3. A godly mother is priceless.

ILLUSTRATION: About 15 years ago, Sylvia Porter, a noted financial analyst, analyzed the cost of the labor performed by a mother each year at home. She computed an average hourly fee for nursemaid, housekeeper, cook, dishwasher, food buyer, chauffeur, seamstress, practical nurse, etc. The cost back then was about 27 thousand dollars a year.

4. Proverbs expressed the value of a godly woman, saying that her worth is far more than rubies.

INVEST IN OTHERS SACRIFICIALLY

5. She is portrayed as a woman who invested in others.
6. A godly wife is a person who invests in her husband.
7. This is a woman who had the best interest of others in mind.
8. This is a woman that lived for others.
9. She invested her life in others sacrificially.
10. She sacrificed sleep and self to care for others.
11. She gave of herself and invested her life in others.
12. She had a love that reached beyond herself.

“She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.” (Proverbs 31:20)

13. She did not use her hands for herself but used them to touch the lives of others.
14. She was unselfish toward others in need.
15. She is clothed with a spirit of helpfulness.
16. She had the spirit of the Good Samaritan

EXAMPLE: A man traveling on the Jericho road was attacked, robbed, beaten and left to die. Religious people walked by, but a Samaritan, the one least expected to help, stopped. Listen to what Scripture says: “He went to

him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.” (Luke 10:34)

17. He ministered to him and paid for his care.

18. This woman invested in others sacrificially.

19. Her family knew that they could depend upon her.

ILLUSTRATION: (*John draw cartoon) Hungry at the end of the day, a 15-year-old boy found his mother in bed and was suddenly seized with concern.

"Mom, are you sick or something?" "Well, as a matter of fact," his mother replied weakly, "I'm not feeling too well." "I'm sorry, Mom," the boy responded with furrowed brow. After a brief pause, he then added: "Don't you worry a bit about dinner. I'm getting pretty big now, and I'll be happy to carry you down to the stove!" (Daniel D. Meyer, in the sermon, "God's Love for Weary Mothers," Christ Church of Oak Brook, preached)

20. She invested her life in people.

21. She had surrendered self and selfishness and lived a life centered around others.

22. Investing in others sacrificially is at the very heart of motherhood.

23. Investing in others is at the very heart of the gospel.

24. Jesus sacrifices Himself for us.

"He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:2)

25. His sacrifice was purposeful and powerful.

26. It is saving, satisfying, and sufficient.

27. Paul wrote to the church, and to you and I, stating, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interest, but also to the interests of others." (Philippians 2:3-4)

28. Godliness in the real world is expressed through investing our lives sacrificially.

29. It begins by offering our lives to Christ.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship." (Romans 12:1)

INVEST IN OTHERS FAITHFULLY

30. She gave her life to investing in her family and others.

31. This was a woman who was faithful to do what she felt called to do.

32. She was faithful to care, give, serve and love.

33. She was someone her family and others could trust in and depend upon.

34. Like Joseph in the Old Testament, she was a trustworthy person of integrity.

EXAMPLE: When Joseph was given the care of the household of Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, he could be totally trusted with everything in the household. "So he left in Joseph's care everything he had; with Joseph in

**charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.”
(Genesis 39:6)**

35. This woman was faithful to use the gifts, skills, and abilities she had been given for the sake of her family and others.

36. Every mom has been given special gifts and abilities.

37. The call of godliness is to faithfully use them with integrity.

38. The one who lives wisely is faithful to fulfill their call and faithfully use what they have been given.

“Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” (I Corinthians 4:2)

39. The call is not to be guilty about what we do not have or cannot do, but to be faithful to use what we do have.

40. We are not to compare with others but to be trustworthy with whatever God has given us.

41. Godly moms, you are to be faithful stewards of the time, talent, and treasure God has given you.

42. Mom’s are called to faithfully fulfill the charge of the home and children they have to been given.

43. We are all called to be faithful to fulfill the charge God has given us.

ILLUSTRATION: Back in the 1700’s, pastor, poet and songwriter Charles Wesley penned these words. (PRINT WORDS ON SCREEN)

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify;
A never dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.
To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill:
Oh, may it all my powers engage,
To do my Master’s will! (Charles Wesley)

44. It is the call to be faithful

ILLUSTRATION: (WORDS ON SCREEN)

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful;
May the fire of our devotion light their way.
May the footprints that we leave
Lead them to believe,
And the lives we live inspire them to obey.

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful. (Steve Green)

INVEST IN OTHERS INFLUENTIALLY

45. Motherhood is a powerful position of influence.

ILLUSTRATION: G. Campbell Morgan, a profound British preacher whose four sons all became pastors, influenced millions with his sermons, teaching, and writing. One day, when his young son, Howard, finished preaching, a reporter asked him, “Since you have five Pastors in your family who is the greatest preacher?” Expecting the son to give the honor to his father, Howard surprised the reporter by saying, “My Mother!”

46. This godly woman used her speech to influence.

“She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.”

(Proverbs 31:26)

47. Like well seasoned food her speech was well seasoned with wisdom.

48. James gives us some characteristics of what Godly wisdom looks like.

“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.” (James 3:17)

49. She used her voice wisely in a productive way.

ILLUSTRATION: From history, there is a story where President Lincoln called a meeting with some generals during a desperate situation in the Civil War. One of these generals was exceedingly talkative and would not be quiet. He had coal black hair and a gray beard. One of the generals sitting beside Lincoln asked why this gray beard and black hair? Lincoln responded, “Because he works his jaw more than his head.”

50. Here was a woman that used her head and a heart of wisdom to speak with.

51. Not only did she speak with wisdom but also faithful instruction is on her tongue.

52. The King James Version of the Bible says, “and in her tongue is the law of kindness.”

53. The Revised Standard says, “and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.”

54. The word here in the Hebrew is the word ‘hesed’.

55. The word means ‘devoted love or fidelity.’

56. The corresponding word in Arabic is ‘used’ and is connected with affection and nurturing, carrying the concept of the milk of human kindness.

57. It is used of the goodness and abundant grace of God to His own people, His free favor and faithfulness.

58. It speaks of “zealous affection towards all that is good, and truly desirable.”

59. It is not a speech that is cruel or hard but denotes love and gracefulness, proceeding from a compassionate sympathy with the suffering and wants of men.

60. Her talk is not empty, aimless chatter, but speech full of meaning and purpose.

61. Her words are valuable and make a contribution to life.

“Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” (Proverbs 16:24)

Proverbs 25:11 reads, “A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”

62. Love guides her words.

I Corinthians 13:4-8 reads, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

63. This godly woman influenced others.

ILLUSTRATION: Jim Cymbala tells of a missionary couple from Sweden named David and Svea Flood who went to Africa in 1921 with their two year

son. They sacrificed their lives in ministry and yet, because of fears from the village chief of alienating the local gods, they were not allowed to minister to the people in the village. They only had contact with a young boy who sold them chicken and eggs. Svea, a tiny for feet eight inches tall, lead him to Jesus.

Svea died about 17 days after childbirth, leaving a little girl named Ain. Disillusioned by her death, Svea's husband gave the child to a missionary couple nearby who both died within eight months. She was then given over to some American missionaries who adjusted her Swedish name to Aggie and brought her to the U.S. Years later, Aggie married a young man who eventually became president of a Christian college. One day, as she was looking at a Swedish religious magazine, she saw a photo that stopped her cold. It was of a grave with a white cross-on the cross were the words SVEA FLOOD. Finding someone at the college to interpret the story, Aggie found that her mother had led the little African boy to Christ and there were now six hundred Christian believers in that one village. Aggie and her husband eventually took a trip to Sweden, where she was able to see her father, who was still bitter toward God. Aggie led her father back to Christ. This mother, Svea, left a legacy of love.

64. She invested in that which has eternal value.

65. Her influence lived on in others.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.” Matthew 6:19-20

66. We are to live to influence others for Christ.

67. Godliness calls us to influence others for God.

68. Mom, are you living to influence others for Jesus?

69. Through the years, children have sung the song that speaks of influence.

70. In my perspective, it is one of the great messages of the gospel put in song.

ILLUSTRATION: Written by Harry Dixon Loes in about 1920, it has often been published with a set of hand movements to be used for the instruction of children.

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

ILLUSTRATION: ** (Paul line up child or children to sing it)**

71. If we want our kids not just to sing it but to live it, than we must live it.

72. We must intentional shine to influence for Christ.

“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

73. Don't hide the light, Mom.

74. Abide with the light so that you will reflect His light.

ILLUSTRATION: A little boy forgot his lines in a Sunday School presentation. His mother, sitting in the front row to prompt him, gestured

and formed the words silently with her lips, but it didn't help. Her son's memory was blank. Finally, she leaned forward and whispered the cue, "I am the light of the world." The child beamed and with great feeling and a loud, clear voice said, "My mother is the light of the world."

75. The Lord has sent you, Mom, to let your light shine.

76. Mom, God has called you to let your light shine.

77. Influence your children for Jesus.

78. All of us are to influence others and point people to the Lord.

II. (vs. 28 - 31) THE CHARACTERISTIC OF LIVING FOR GOD

"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." (Proverbs 31:30)

1. The word 'charm' means form or figure,
2. The point is that outward appearance can be deceptive.
3. Something can appear to be something it is not.
4. People can be deceived by the outward facade.
5. The term 'beauty' speaks of face and feature.
6. Our society idolizes the so-called "beautiful people" - popular entertainers and models whose youthful faces dominate the pages of the magazines at the supermarket checkout.
7. The reality is that beauty is fleeting.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Pictures) It was said of Elizabeth Taylor, who died this year, that she grew from a doll-faced child starlet to become one of the silver screen's most striking beauties.

8. Yet, regardless of our fame or fortune, beauty fades.
9. The reality is that beauty is always on the move and, for most of us, it is moving out.
10. Put into the context of real life, charm and beauty mean nothing in the big scheme of things.
11. Such attractiveness has nothing to do with the kind of beauty that delights the heart of God.

"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight." (1 Peter 3:3-4)

12. Something is beauty if it reflects God's own righteousness and serves God's purposes.
13. Form and face have no real lasting value, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.
14. True beauty comes from a way of life that acknowledges God in every sphere.
15. Regardless of our outward appearance, then, all of us can be beautiful.
16. By God's transforming grace, we can have the beauty of holiness and integrity that mirrors the character of His Son.

17. As we devote ourselves wholeheartedly to the fulfillment of the Lord's purposes in our lives, we will develop the kind of God-honoring beauty that does not fade.

18. Living for God is the way to become truly beautiful people.

ILLUSTRATION: Salvation Army leader, Albert W. T. Orsborn, in about 1916, wrote these words. (*Words on screen)

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wonderful passion and purity;
O Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.*

ILLUSTRATION: "...but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

Proverbs 31:30

19. Here is a picture of a woman who had it together with God.

20. The writer is not talking about becoming the mom or godly person you can be on your own.

ILLUSTRATION: In his little book, *The Prayer Of Jabez*, Bruce Wilkinson said a little statement that really caught my attention. "When you take little steps you don't need God."

21. We are talking about taking some big steps that can only be taken when you are walking with God.

22. He is talking about someone who had God as the center of their lives.

23. We discovered last week when we begin the series that Proverbs begins with God as the center and concludes that way.

24. The book comes full circle, beginning and ending with the fear of the Lord.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline." (Proverbs 1:7)

25. To fear God is not to be afraid of Him but to come to Him and stand in awe.

26. Fearing God is foundational.

"And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deuteronomy 10:12)

27. What does it mean in daily experience to "fear the Lord"?

28. Let's go back to the beginning of Israel's national life.

29. In Exodus 20, after the giving of the Ten Commandments, it says in verse 18:

"When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.' Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.'" (Exodus 20:18-20)

30. This passage says you are being tested and that you pass the test only if you don't fear.

31. Then the next call is to fear the Lord.

32. The text provides the distinctions necessary to make sense out of this.

33. The fear that Moses was telling them to get rid of was the fear of coming close to God and hearing His voice.

34. The fear that Moses wanted them to keep before their eyes was that God is fearfully powerful and opposed to sin.
35. The fear of kindling God's powerful wrath against sin ought not to drive us away from God but to God for mercy.
36. Therefore, the fear of the Lord is accompanied by tremendous blessing that flows out of our relationship with God.

(*Note for me have men and women read at different times)

"The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them." (Psalm 25:14)

"How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you..." (Psalm 31:19)

"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and he delivers them." (Psalm 34:7)

"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;" (Psalm 103:11)

"He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them." (Psalm 145:19)

"The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love." (Psalm 147:11)

37. A wife or mother who refuses to include God in her life can never achieve the model or ideal described here.
38. This woman had placed God on the throne of her life and was serving Him as Lord.
39. More than what she does is who she is because of her relationship with God.
40. The first and controlling principle is a right relationship with God.
41. To fear God is to know God intimately.
42. To fear God is to submit to God.
43. Fearing the Lord is surrendering rule of your life over to the Lord.
44. Fearing the Lord is not just a frame of mind or a belief in the head that doesn't impact your life.
45. Fearing the Lord impacts the way we live.
46. Fearing the Lord impacts what you watch, do, and think about.
47. Fearing the Lord translates into our actions.

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

ILLUSTRATION: * I really like what Gene Wilkes wrote: "Obedience, as it is embodied in Jesus Christ, is a total listening, a giving attention with no hesitation or limitation, a being 'all ear'." (Gene Wilkes)**

48. Fearing God is doing the right things.

"Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.'" (Acts 10:34-35)

49. When you get it together with God, He will help you put life together.
50. Getting things right with God helps you get life right.
51. Only through His Lordship can we become the people God wants us to be.
52. To fear the Lord is to live according to His purposes, by His power.
53. The kind of woman she became was the result of fearing the Lord.
54. When you commit your life to God, you discover how committed God is to you.

ILLUSTRATION: With her permission, I want to tell you about one of our ladies in our church. She had planned to commit suicide. No hope. She had been told Jesus did not love her anymore by her mom. She turned on the radio and felt divine intervention. She listened to a story on forgiveness and how the Lord forgives everyone, not just a few. Jesus died for all. The Holy Spirit began to convict and she broke into tears and had to pull off the freeway and get things right with God. She began a new journey with God. With God's help, she began to put the pieces of her life together. Now she is an active part of our body, serving the Lord and growing in the things of God.

55. When she put God in the right place in her life, God put her life right.

"...but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." (Proverbs 31:30)

56. Give praise where praise is due.

"Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her." (Proverbs 31:28)

ILLUSTRATION: When Abraham Lincoln was asked, "What is the greatest book you've ever read?" he succinctly replied, "My mother!"

"All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel Mother." -- Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

President George Washington (1732-1799) - "My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her."

President Andrew Jackson - "There never was a woman like her. She was gentle as a dove and brave as a lioness. The memory of my mother and her teachings were, after all, the only capital I had to start life with, and on that capital I have made my way."

Someone once asked Dwight D. Eisenhower when he was President, "Mr. President, you have known every great man of our time. Who is the greatest man you ever met?" Without an instant's hesitation he said, "The greatest person I ever met wasn't a man. It was a woman. It was my mother. She never had much schooling, but she was wise in God's wisdom. She went to school to the greatest of all books, the Bible. And she acquired real wisdom."

57. True wisdom comes from God

58. It is about what God can do in you.

59. It comes from giving God center and first place in our lives.

60. The call is to live our lives for God.

61. It is making the decision to live for God.

62. Will you make the decision to make God in the center of your life?
63. Mom, will you live for God?

CONCLUSION: Two characteristics of a godly women in the real world

I. (vs.10 – 27) THE CHARACTERISTIC OF INVESTING IN OTHERS

INVEST IN OTHERS SACRIFICALLY

INVEST IN OTHERS FAITHFULLY

INVEST IN OTHERS INFLUENTIALLY

II. (vs.28 - 31) THE CHARACTERISTIC OF LIVING FOR GOD

We live in a real world with real challenges. The tears that moms cry are real. The problems our children face are real. Physical illness & health issues are real. The financial challenges are real. Depression is real. Loneliness is real. Fears are real. Discouragement is real. Failure is real. Regret is real. Difficult problems in a marriage are real.

In the midst of it comes the reality that a life of wisdom, a life of godliness is possible because God is real.

You can be a godly woman in the real world because God is real.

You can be a godly Mom in the real world because God is real

You can be a godly person in the real world because God is real.

At all times, in all situations, God is real.

Whatever you are going through, you can discover God is real and is able to help you to be a godly person in the real world.